

*Humanistes du bassin des Carpates II: Johannes Sambucus.* Gábor Almási and Farkas Gábor Kiss.

Europa Humanistica 14. Turnhout: Brepols, 2014. lxxiv + 288 pp. €75.

The goal of the series Europa Humanistica is to present the work of early modern philologists by publishing the paratexts, e.g., prefaces and dedicatory poems, of their erudite editions. This volume, edited by Gábors Almási and Farkas Gábor Kiss, gives exceptional insight into Johannes Sambucus's (1531–84) philological activity. Originating from Hungary, Sambucus lived the major part of his life in Vienna, using his extensive international network and his vast manuscript collection to become one of the most important philologists of the region. The book contains a large critical apparatus that illustrates the forewords and the poems attached to Sambucus's editions, which include, to mention only some significant contributions, the oeuvre of the Hungarian humanist poet Ianus Pannonius and many classical authors, such as Lucian of Samosata, Petronius, and Diogenes Laertius.

The introduction of the book offers a profound study of Sambucus's work, even though minor errors occur regarding some historical facts. For instance, the authors describe Jacques-Auguste de Thou (Thuanus) as a Protestant historian, although the term *Gallican* would be far more relevant. Nevertheless, besides Almási's previous book on Sambucus, *The Uses of Humanism: Andreas Dudith (1533–1589), Johannes Sambucus (1531–1584), and the East Central European Republic of Letters* (2009), the introduction is the most current and reliable account of Sambucus's activity.

In this introductory study the main viewpoints of the analysis are the functioning of early modern scholarly networks, the social status of the philological career, and the goals and methods Sambucus set for himself as a philologist and as a publisher. The great achievement of this book is that

Almási and Kiss managed to deconstruct, or at least refine, several preconceptions about what we call humanistic philology.

The first surprising fact concerns Sambucus's social status, which also determined the nature of his relationships in the republic of letters. Born in a bourgeois family of Trnava (today in Slovakia), he rose to the rank of nobleman of the imperial court and became a member of the emperor's council. As a rich manuscript collector, he enjoyed an important prestige among humanists. After thoroughly examining Sambucus's network with the intellectuals of his time, the authors conclude with a strange contradiction: in spite of the humanist rhetoric of the friendships, there was a true inequality between Sambucus and some of his collaborators. While the friends of the Hungarian philologist, according to his remaining correspondence, had mostly bourgeois origins and enjoyed socioeconomical conditions equal to his, Sambucus generally worked on his editions with philologists of a lower social rank, for example, the Antwerp circle of the editor Christophe Plantin. These coworkers considered the collector of rare manuscripts as a protector, although he was never a wealthy patron.

The authors stress that pursuing a philological career in Vienna was not an easy choice. Officially, Sambucus was a historian of the emperor, but without any important production in historical genres. Even his role as a nobleman of the court could be accommodated with certain intellectual freedom. In spite of this *otium*, however, he could not always cope alone with all the tasks a philologist of this time was expected to do. The isolation of Vienna from the European centers of publishing (the Netherlands or Switzerland) simply prevented him from entirely taking part in the elaboration of the editions published under his name.

The most astonishing conclusion of the authors states that Sambucus often lacked the humility for meticulous textological work. In theory, he shared the editorial principles of his contemporaries. But even if he had made some emendations based on textual witnesses rather than on conjectures, as Pier Vettori suggested, he often charged one of his faraway coworkers to do the hardest and the most unpleasant textological tasks such as the transcriptions. These kinds of conclusions make Almási and Kiss's book a very meaningful companion in allowing us to understand the possibilities available to an East-Central European philologist and the way he used his international network. This work can be interpreted as an instructive case study on the different, frequently contradictory, roles of an early modern scholar.

GÁBOR FÖRKÖLI, *Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest*